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HAT STORAGE DEVICE

This application claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Application No. 60/457,692, filed 26 March 2003.

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BACKGROUND

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Many people wear baseball and golf type hats. Many people wear these hats when engaging in sporting activities, for example, jogging, baseball, hiking, boating, bowling, and so forth. Even people not involved with sports wear baseball type hats as part of their uniform, for example delivery service workers and factory workers. Also, many people who are just going about their daily activities commonly wear baseball type hats. Thus, millions of people wear baseball and golf type hats and these hats are part of the fabric of our society.

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However, the same people who wear these hats oftentimes need a place to store an article while wearing the hat. In the past, attempts have been made to provide for pockets internal to the hat so that articles could be stored therein. However, these past designs did not provide a structure to support the pocket, nor did these past designs provide for a convenient pocket to hold credit cards, a driver's license, or an airplane ticket. Also, many of these past designs called for internal sewing or many internal fasteners provided on the hat.

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SUMMARY

The invention comprises various embodiments of a storage device for hats. In one embodiment, the storage device comprises an internal wallet for holding unfolded money, tickets, and

other items typically too big for the standard wallet, for example various receipts, boarding passes, and lottery cards. The storage device provides for an internal wallet that is positioned and secured in the dome of the hat, which does not contact the wearer's head. The hat storage device does not require hook and loop or other fasteners, because the hat storage device is pressure fit into the hat utilizing structural boning members. Another embodiment calls for small side pockets which are slid onto the structural boning members of the hat storage device. The side and sliding pockets may be used for securely storing folded currency, credit card(s), driver's license and/or other identification, shoppers club cards, video rental cards, spare golf tees, ball markers, spare batteries and/or a key(s). When the wearer of the hat is casually dressed without suitable pocketed storage means disposed elsewhere on his or her person, or is in need of additional storage for items that would be too bulky for the traditional wallet or pocket, he or she can store articles in the hat storage device.

The present invention may be sold in a kit comprising a hat storage device 22 as shown in (Figures. 1, 2, and 8) along with a hat, and/or pockets, and combinations thereof. Or, since the hat storage device can be readily inserted into any hat (it can be done in under 30 seconds), it can be sold alone. The hat storage device can be used in a "fully constructed" or "soft top" baseball or golf type hat, as well as various Beret type hats and others.

Thus, the present storage hat overcomes the problems associated with the past designs and provides for internal support members (boning) that may span from the one side of the hat, to the top of the dome of the hat, and back down to the other side of the hat, with boning extending from the dome of the hat to the brim of the hat. Also, side mounted pockets may be provided adjacent the wearer's ear, these pockets sized to receive credit cards and a driver's license.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE FIGURES

FIG. 1 shows a diagrammatic view of the first embodiment of the hat
5 storage device and a hat.

FIG. 2 shows a diagrammatic view of the first embodiment of the hat
storage device and hat.

FIG. 3 shows a diagrammatic view of a hat and an alternate
embodiment of the hat storage device of this invention.

10 .FIG. 4a shows a front elevational view of an attachable side pocket.

FIG. 4b shows a front elevational view of an attachable side pocket.

FIG. 5 shows a bottom plan view of the hat storage device shown in
FIGS. 1 and 2.

FIG. 6 shows a diagrammatic view of another embodiment of the hat
15 storage device with a side pocket.

FIG. 7 shows a diagrammatic view of the hat storage device wherein a
side pocket is attached to the cross member boning.

FIG. 8 shows a diagrammatic view of an embodiment similar to the
embodiment depicted in FIG. 6 except that the side pocket is inverted.

20 FIG. 9 shows a diagrammatic view wherein the side pocket is attached
to the wrap-around boning member.

FIG. 10 shows a bottom plan view of the hat storage device similar to
the embodiment depicted in FIG. 5 except that an additional pocket is
provided.

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DETAILED DESCRIPTION

At the outset it is pointed out that common reference
numbers are used throughout the description and drawings to indicate
common parts and elements.

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With reference to the various figures, the hat **20** for use
with the present invention may be any of various conventional baseball

type or golf type hats or other. The hat **20** may, for example, comprise a peak or brim **34** and an adjustment strap **36** so that the circumference of opening **21** in the hat **20** may be adjusted, the opening **21** for receiving the wearer's head. The hat **20** also comprises
5 an internal folded band **28**, sometimes referred to as a sweatband, and an inside surface **24** and outside surface **26**. (Shown open in FIG. 9.)

A storage device **22** is provided which may be variously embodied, as will be described presently. The storage device **22** comprises a boning material which may comprise NYLOBONE,
10 manufactured by Aranac Ribbon Mills of Plattsburg NY, which is sold in ¼ inch width, which is difficult to break and has an resilient memory, that is after it is deformed it can go back to its pre-deformed state, or the boning may comprise durable resilient plastics, or other materials known in the art. Another type of boning material may comprise boning
15 sold under the brand name RIGILENE, a mark registered Trademark Selectus LTD. of England. This type of material is used for the internal wallet **56** and the various pocket closures and side members, which will be described presently. This type of material is easily moved so that the wallet/pocket can be opened, and this material automatically keeps
20 the pocket/wallet open, and it only takes a tap from the user's finger to close the wallet/pocket. Of course, the present invention is not so limited, and other materials known to those of ordinary skill in the art could be used for the boning and the wallet/pocket closures.

As shown in FIG. 1, the storage device **22** is an insert
25 which can be received inside of a hat **20**. The storage device **22** comprises a cross boning member **39** which spans from a first end **40**, to a mid-point **42** (which is approximately adjacent to the top of dome of the hat **20** when installed in the hat **20**), and back down to a second end **44**. A forward boning member **46** (see FIGS. 1 and 5) extends
30 from the mid-point **42** to a forward securing member **48**. When the hat storage device **22** is installed into a hat **20**, the forward securing

member **48** is tucked into the front portion of the folded band **28** and serves to hold the forward portion of hat storage device **22** in place. It may be made of a boning material, but does not have to be. Various other materials, such as a thin metal or stiff plastic material may be employed. Wallet support boning members **50a** and **50b** are each joined at one end with the cross boning member **39**, and at the other end with closure boning member **52**, as shown in FIGS. 1 and 5. A wallet pull tab **54** is provided to open the internal wallet **56** by allowing closure boning member **52** to be pulled forward. The internal wallet **56** is defined by the wallet side wall **55**, and the netting **100** which extends between the wallet support boning members **50a-b**. The netting material **100** comprises materials which are made of girdle-like or other materials, fabrics, and other materials known in the art. It is noted that the closure boning member **52** is made of a material, as described above, which once opened stays open, and then it only takes a small push to close again. This eliminates the need for snaps or hook and loop fasteners to close the internal wallet **56**. It is further noted that the internal wallet **56** is held above the wearer's head, that is, it is found in the dome area **23** of the hat **20**. The internal wallet **56** may be sized so as to receive things such as unfolded cash, airline tickets, passes, items too large for a wallet, etc., and it defines a wallet interior **58**. This is shown in FIG. 2. Shown in FIG. 5 is an embodiment of the hat insert **22** which shows examples of the dimensions of the hat storage device **22**, but in no way does this limit the size of the storage device **22** because it can be variously made of a plurality of differing sizes.

To install the storage device **22**, reference is made to FIGS. 1, 2, and 8. The user need only take the device **22** and place the securing member **48**, the first and second ends **40** and **44** of the cross member in the internal folded band **28**. That is the entire task. An installed storage device **22** is shown in FIG. 2. Installation and/or removal can be accomplished in under thirty (30) seconds. It is a

particular advantage of the present invention that no hook and loop, rib and channel, snaps, buttons, or other type of fastener is required in order to place and secure the storage device **22** in the hat **20**. This is because the hat storage device **22** employs pressure fitting in order to
5 secure the boning **48** and the first and second ends **40** and **44** of the cross members against the internal folded band **28**. This pressure fit is sufficient to hold the storage device **22** firmly in place, regardless of the load in the internal wallet **56**. This provides for tremendous versatility of the hat device **22**, because the hat devices **22** can be sold with or
10 without hats **20** at retail outlets. A buyer could have an old favorite hat **20**, and install the hat storage device **22** therein without modifying the hat **20** at all. The buyer would not need to sew or glue anything to install the hat storage device **22**. Further, the hat storage device **22** may be sold alone, or as part of a kit, with the kit comprising a hat **20**
15 and a hat storage device **22** and, optionally, a one or more of side pockets **60**, **80**. Another feature is that the contents of the hat storage device do not contact the wearer's head.

Also, articles may be stored between the storage device **22** and the inside surface **24** of the hat **20**, that is, the articles can be
20 trapped therebetween. This can be done for this embodiment, and the remaining embodiments of the present storage device **22**. This is one more way in which the storage device **22** allows for storage of large articles.

In an alternate embodiment, the structure of the storage
25 device **22** may be similar to the structure shown in FIG. 1, except the cross boning member **39** is absent. This device still performs satisfactorily, and still has an internal wallet **56**, and is quickly installed by merely inserting the securing member **48** inside the internal folded band **28** of the hat **20**. Again, the pressure fit between the securing
30 member **48** and the internal folded band **28** holds the storage device **22** in place, and articles can be stored within internal wallet **56** as well

as between the storage device **22** and the inside surface **24** of the hat **20**. This model may be used in the soft top or unconstructed type golf or baseball type hats, where the wearer would like the added flexibility to store extra large checks or lottery playing cards or oversized
5 boarding passes behind storage device **22** and the dome of the hat. Again, storage is available in all embodiments between the storage device **22** and the inside surface **24** of the hat **20**.

An additional embodiment is shown in FIG. 3, which shows a storage device **20** which further comprises a surrounding
10 boning member **70**. The surrounding boning member **70** is joined with the forward boning member **46** at junction **72**, such that the surrounding boning member **70** and the forward boning member **46** are connected at this point. At the locations where the cross member boning **39** and the surrounding boning member **70** pass by one
15 another, they are not joined together.

Turning to FIG. 4, shown therein is a sliding side pocket **80**. The sliding side pocket **80** is variously embodied so that it may be attached to the surrounding boning **70** in a plurality of different ways. The sliding pocket **80** is formed from pocket boning **82**, and comprises
20 a pull tab **84** for gaining access to the interior **90** of the sliding pocket **80**. An opening **86** is provided for in the sliding pocket **80**. A first sleeve **92** and second sleeve **94** are formed in the rear of the sliding pocket **80**. The sleeves **92**, **94** are sized to receive the surrounding boning member **70** therein. This provides for a dual use for the sliding
25 side pocket **80** as will be described presently.

FIG. 6 shows how the side pocket **80** may be attached to the surrounding boning member **70** by the first sleeve **92** formed in the side pocket **80**. FIG. 8 shows what is shown in FIG. 6

with the difference being that the sliding pocket **80** is installed on the surrounding boning member **70** in an inverted position in FIG. 6. This installation of the sliding pocket **80** allows for quicker access into the sliding pocket **80**, but the configuration shown in FIG. 6 is more secure because the opening **86** of the pocket **80** is nested in the folded band of the hat **20**.

In a further embodiment, shown in FIG. 7, the hat storage device **22** of FIG. 1 is shown together with a pocket **110** for attachment thereto. Pocket **110** has a vertical sleeve **112**, as well as first and second rear sleeves **92**, **94**, and it comprises a pull tab **114**. To install this pocket **110**, the cross boning member **39** is slid through the vertical sleeve **112**, which results in the arrangement as shown in FIG. 7. Of course, another pocket **110** could be inserted on the other end of the cross boning member **39**. Furthermore, pocket **110** could be inserted in an inverted position with the pull tab **114** at the bottom, to be installed with the pull tab **114** tucked inside of the hat internal folded band **28**.

In the embodiment depicted in FIG. 8, a hat storage device **22**, similar to the embodiment of FIG. 3, is shown in combination with a side pocket **80** attached thereto by sliding surrounding bone member **70** through sleeve **94**. It will be appreciated that side pocket **80** could also be attached in an inverted orientation.

FIG. 9 shows how the sliding pocket **80** can be loaded with credit cards, money, and other articles and installed on the surrounding boning member **70**.

FIG. 10 shows another embodiment of the hat device **22**. In this embodiment, not only is there an internal wallet **56**, but there is also a pouch pocket **120** which includes a pouch pocket closure **122**. The pouch pocket **120** is opened by pulling tab **121**, and in this manner access gained to the pouch pocket interior **124**. As shown in the FIG. 10, the pouch pocket **120** is defined by the internal wallet **56** sidewall

55, and the pouch pocket side wall **126**.

Thus, the present storage device **22** is quite useful for storing articles within the hat for safekeeping during times when no other suitable storage means is being worn. For example, while
5 wearing shorts or bathing suit, and or, a T-shirt without pockets, or other apparel without sufficient pockets for storage. Additionally, frequently the owner of a given hat or cap has become quite attached to the particular hat, due to a particularly comfortable fit, style or durability of the material etc. This invention can be used with a
10 preexisting favorite hat, that is it can be sold just as a storage device **22**, and the purchaser can install the storage device **22** in under 30 seconds. This eliminates the need to purchase an otherwise undesirable hat, in order to have a hat with the storage features described above.

15 It will be appreciated by those skilled in the art that while the hat storage device has been described above in connection with particular embodiments and examples, the hat storage device is not necessarily so limited and other embodiments, examples, uses, and modifications and departures from the embodiments, examples, and
20 uses may be made without departing from the hat storage device. All of these embodiments are intended to be within the scope and spirit of the hat storage device.